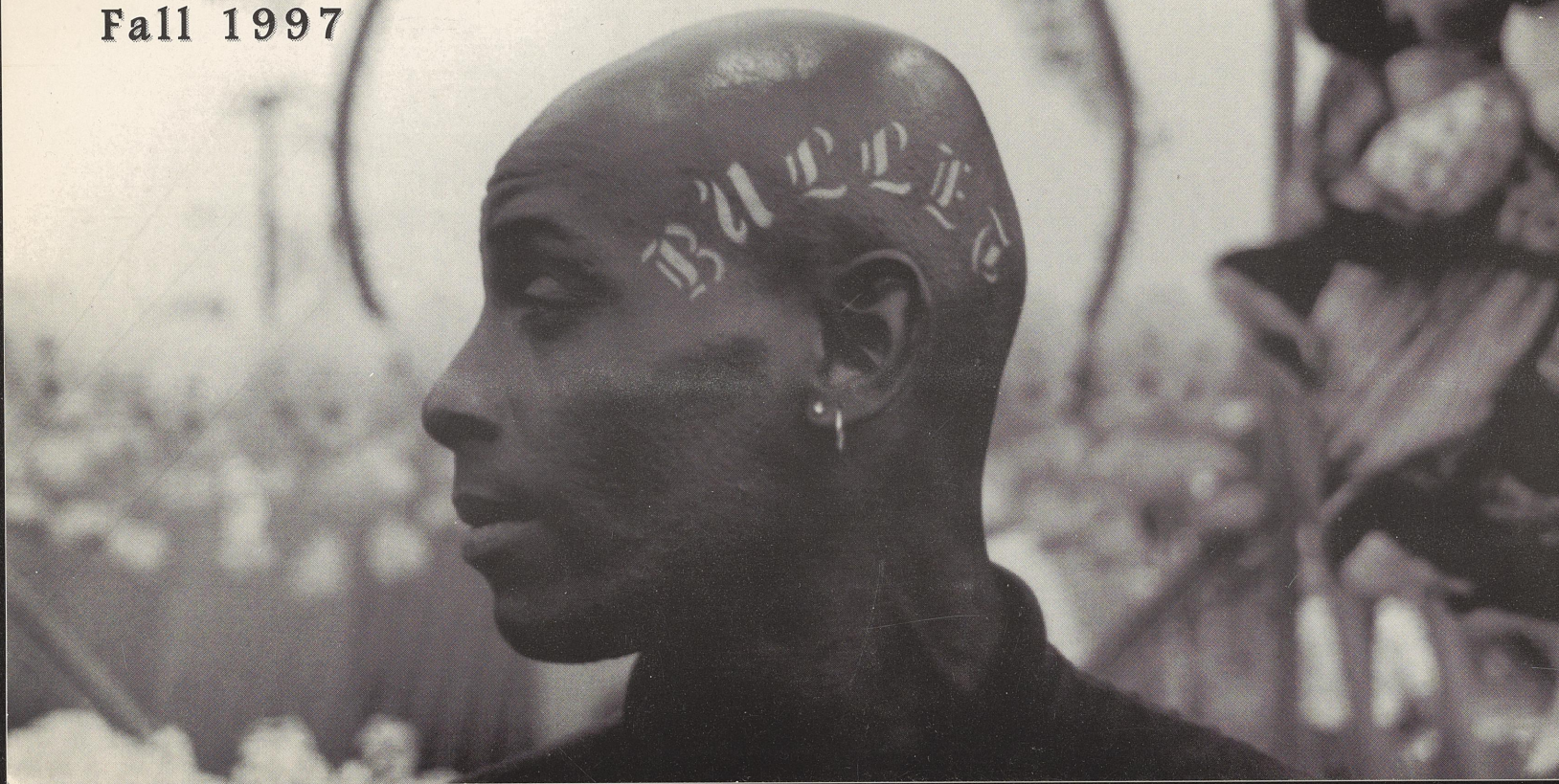


HALLMARKS

Fall 1997



The Plane Ride

this is our story
it can be told quickly now
it was so short, like a plane ride.
a trip -
just across my backyard.

we boarded each other,
shy at first
and then anxious.
we bit nails at the awkward departure.
we lifted the arm rest and
nourished a touch.
we knew not our fellow passengers
or the plastic woman
standing in the aisle
breathing directions and
shoving warnings
into our ears.
we were all we could hear.
you,
and the plane we now owned,
were my only company.
enveloped.
on a plane, the flight is all.

we pushed a button
and we let our backs down.
months, it seems, we were flying.
we spoke with our eyes.
we slept on shoulders.
we touched with tongues.
we sucked on clouds.

but anything besides
the sedimentary arm to arm rest
and glacial head to back of chair
feels comfortable on a plane ride.

our playtime
was to pass time.
we arrived at the sensation of falling.
we passed through air pockets, and
you stowed your tray table away.

and our final destination
was hardly recognizable,
sort of like
not knowing your hometown
through the airplane's window.

I don't think we crashed.
if we had,
we wouldn't still be so tired.
it would have been an instant thing -
a boom and then a fire.
but we avoid each other's glances
and we silently have resumed our living
on the ground.
I don't think we crashed,
only fell some.

Tallu Schuyler (12)



Lauren Kitchell (12)

I Pledge

Living in poverty, I pledge allegiance
With kids who are dirty, hungry and scared, to the flag
A husband who has no job, of the United States of America
No knowledge of what comes tomorrow, to whom the republic
Crying with no one to care, for which it stands
Labeled as lower class dogs, one nation
Who really cares?, under God
Separated from love and happiness, indivisible
No where to go because I'm not accepted, with liberty
The sign says "No Irish can apply", and justice
Am I an American?, for all!

Jennifer Harrison (9)

Waiting

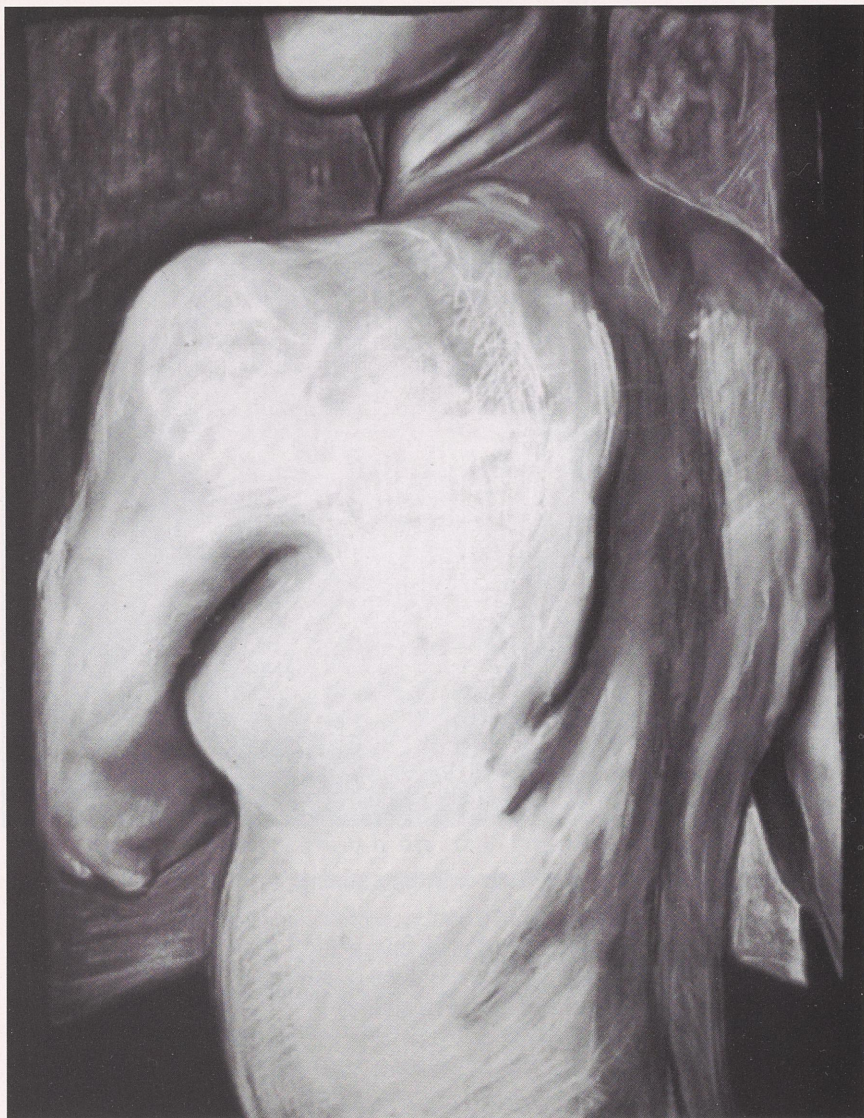
The smell of an old man's aftershave.
There is a precise tear in the leather on the armrest beneath my hand.
The distant laughter of faceless voices coming from the television on the wall cannot comfort us.
Someone behind me is buying a coffee, I can hear the quarters make their descent and hit the pool of much loose change below.
And across from me, a clock ticks.
There is a breath of cool air as someone opens the door, and for a moment the sirens of the ambulances outside blare loudly before the sound is suddenly cut off by the closing of the heavy door.
The old man beside me coughs and grows weary from the effort.
A nurse calls someone's name, not mine, and a young man prepares to hear the news that could change his life, or could simply become part of an anecdote told across a coffee table for years to come.
A dark-haired woman turns to look up at the clock as she has done every five minutes for the past hour, and sighs deeply.
Tick, tick, tick...

Maria Gumina (11)

Emptiness in the Forest

This worn house, sagging from old age, creaks under the weight of ancient solitude. Its foundation has cracked and settled over time, along with the slowly shifting earth crust. The front door hangs half-open on its rusty hinges, saying a solemn hello as I approach. Uneasily, the tired planks of the old wood porch sigh beneath my feet with each cautious step. I tread carefully across the weather-beaten, shaky boards and steal inside, crossing the threshold to the past into someone else's life. This neglected shelter, once a home, smells of must and untold secrets and aches for feet to wear paths on its once-shiny floors and for warm, sleeping bodies to dream sweetly in its soft beds. The thick silence screams at me to do these things; it aches for me to take some of its emptiness away. I am its only hope in this deep forest, the only feet it can ask to relieve its loneliness. A breeze penetrates from the missing window panes and ushers me through the dusty rooms. In each one I imagine generations coming and going, embraced long ago by this house when it was young, just as the surrounding forest embraces the structure now in its old age. Listening for the stories of pain and joy, hardship and happiness these walls could reveal, I wander through this deserted comfort, creating a story of my own. If only these walls could form words to tell its life to me, I would listen and learn, and perhaps walk some on the lonely floors, or lie down a while in the sagging beds, to give this worn house some company and comfort.

Kerry Bartoe (10)



Kristina Treanor (12)

As the dancer leaps
I think of being a child
and wishing to dance

Helen Martin (9)



Margo Martin (11)

A Talk of Tulip and Sun

Erectly standing, turn your face toward me
I will give you the hope and joy of sunlight
Relax and let your lazy arms hang
In the gentle breeze
Smile at me, oh little one
Cast your yellow eyes
Your smooth peach hair
Let your green legs hold you up
And your eyes will stare all day
At night when I leave, my friend will watch over you
My warmth will envelop you
I will paint pictures across the evening sky
While your friends will sway with the wind
And you will be happy.

Melissa Mosely (9)

The Woods

As she stepped out of the edge of the woods, I could see the sun ignite the few wayward gold strands in her dark head and run down her red fleece shoulders like a river of fire. The impression she radiated was not that of a lost child, but rather she wandered as if she knew exactly where she was going and was simply taking the best way to get there, instead of the most direct. Behind her, the trees shook themselves loose of their leaves like so many over-starched Sunday school dresses, and she crouched amid the nearest pyre, watching them so intensely I began to think she could hear the chlorophyll pulsing weakly through their shriveled brown veins. At some sound inaudible to me, however, she cut off the leaves mid-sentence with an abrupt rocking back onto her heels. Fixing two round, blue magnets on the trees, she ardently lured her shadow, against all instincts of such vestiges, into the clearing to defy the sun and shadow-sweeping winds alongside her. Slowly, as shadows do, her distorted twin skirted the wooded doorjambs, then becoming a wave in the middle of the prairie fluttered over the shorn stubble, sending a few sparks flying, but not extinguishing the bright leaf flames as it broke upon the shore of the pile. There it lingered for an equivocal moment before entwining itself with her at every tangent point so as not to miss any action without following it like a musical note lingering into the rest. She seemed before my eyes to grow older as she chided her constant companion for its inexorable wantonness, as if fire could reprimand water for flowing. No sooner had she finished, however, than she herself became a fireball, spiraling through the leaves with her shadow one step in canon ; rolling, rolling, until I could no longer tell where the earth ended and the child began. A gust that seemed to originate from their own miniature tornado tugged at the shadow, but she reached out a protective hand to settle her little shadow's whirlwind. Afire from head to toe, the girl became as a leaf herself and as her shadow talked with her, it too began to hear the pulsing of one hundred aged veins. Watching the leaves carefully, it did not notice when the little girl arose, or follow when she blew like a leaf herself further on her journey. It was only with the coming of dusk that the rosy-cheeked shadow in a blue knit stocking cap found herself alone and emanated a long, mournful wail, and my own tears caught in my throat, for I knew I could not bring that girl back to me, either.

Molly Arvin (10)



Tallu Schuyler

In Between Sheets

If you smoothed the blue sheets, the cool cotton sherbet
until the wrinkles were straight,
sliding your palms over;
tug on your side, and I'll tug on mine,
And we'll crack the crinkle puzzle.
And who thinks that's a good idea?
And I'm sure you don't at all.
But I respect your family and the flag.
So tuck in your corner and I'll pull from the top.
And we've almost got it.
But not for long...you pulled too hard.
And look what we've ended up with, this jungle-mess.
But what a comfortable place to lie in.

Mandy Lomax (12)

Sandstone

In a past life,
my mother was sand compressed to rock.
Her hard love,
the abrasive scrubbings she gave
me in the bathtub,
were the quartz of her bones.
Weathering has left its mark.
The farm mornings milking cows.
Gathering last night's pecans.
Walking in rows of corn
and listening to shucks rustle against the wind.
These have left layers,
deposits of minerals
to color her skin and thoughts.

Sandstone is born beneath the
pressure of oceans;
my mother was created under
the humid pinetrees and the air so thick
it beat into her eyes.
And like the rock
she is riddled with honeycombs
where granules slide loosely-
that break away to leave
wounds pocketed in her flesh.
Grandma's Alzheimer's was one-
her frail fingers scraped the
loose grains free as she grasped my mother's hand

And the day my father walked out,
sand spilled from her eyes
trailed down the skin of her face
and pooled on the floor.
When I was a child and
we went to the beach,
I built her sandcastles
as high and as wide as myself,
and the light mirrored
the sand in her face.

Devon Williamson (12)

Immersed in a Torrent of Pacificity

The huge halogen lights were just beginning to warm up as my eyes adjusted to the half darkness. The floor was a strange sort of hard carpet. I had been here before, but in this strange incandescence the room felt quite alien and empty. I was the first one there. As I walked to the stage I thought about how hard the floor was. It was hard enough that it would hurt. I didn't know how we could wrestle in here. There was a spatter pop as the lights oozed yellow, yolkish light. I noticed the large black mat, now painted green by the lamps, and began to take off my shoes. I unfastened the complex system of knots and bows I had devised to keep my shoes tied all day and tucked my large-face silver watch deep in the toe of one Adidas cross trainer. I decided that before Wilson brought the kids in I should make my belongings scarce and harder to "misappropriate." I cloistered them behind a velvet stage curtain and waited for Wilson.

I had been working for The Bridge Program for three weeks. I was trying very hard to teach eighth grade English and History to inner city kids, but I was losing "it"; so far I had been thrown over shoulders, flirted with, ignored, inspired, and awed. I was a wreck. I had been given presents, smiles, and compliments. Someone had taken forty dollars from my wallet. I didn't know what to think. I worked eight hour days in an air conditioned furnace, and I was starting to lose sight of why I was teaching at all. I remembered how it felt to teach Coleridge to eighth graders, and I also remembered what "I hate you" sounded like through bared teeth. I felt like I was only reaching a few kids. I wasn't doing enough. I wasn't getting it done. It was becoming harder and harder to give love and easier to write things off. Easier to ignore than inspire — easier to give up. I was becoming one in a long line of quitters — a line of people who had forsaken these kids. I was becoming a maker of statistics.

When Wilson came in, his heavy, red hair bounced in the now white light. I could see his freckles from ten feet away, and I thought about how much he reminded me of Huck Finn. The kids rushed in behind him, all black but one. They were tall, squat, built, and immense. They were kids, happy to be out of the class room and ready to fight. I was just there to help. Wilson came over and sat beside me.

"Any of the kids who can reverse one of my holds gets a coke when we get back to school," he said half to me and half to the kids. They all cheered, but I knew that no one would get a coke. I knew that Wilson wouldn't give up just to boost a fragile ego. He looked at me and winked. He took off his hat and Nikes and asked me to put them with my stuff while he put on his wrestling shoes. I put his things with mine. We got the kids to pair up and stand in the orange painted circles of the wrestling mat, but no one wanted to be partners with G'Han. I would have been his partner, but I knew that it was better for me to watch than take part. Wilson put him with another group of two.

G'Han didn't get enough attention. It was obvious that he was bright, but he would "act stupid" to get recognition. He would get in trouble just so he could be singled out, and his aggressive behavior was becoming a point of concern at every staff meeting. G'Han was private and venerable, explosive and angry. He was the wad of contradictions that had come to be my experience. His temper was explosive. He hated to lose, and he hurt without thinking. He was big and dark. He had a face like an over ripe plum — sweet and bruised. He would grasp things quickly and then freeze, or sleep through classes. His friends thought that he was funny; none of them cared that he was smart. We didn't get along very well, but I felt like I needed his approval. I still wanted to reach him. He knew I wasn't a very experienced teacher, and he knew how to press my buttons. But now I was beyond anger. I was confused and disillusioned. We were living in worlds removed, yet our houses were only ten minutes apart.

It seemed as though my arms would never be long enough to touch him.

G'Han learned the holds that Wilson taught and executed them with fierce accuracy. G'Han held his opponents unnecessarily long on the mat. Wilson told me how good it was to let the kids get their anger out in a positive way. I wasn't so sure about that. I was plodding bare foot on the deep rubber mat repeating Wilson's directions and keeping the kids from wandering off; I wondered why I was there. I felt useless, like Santa after Christmas.

Wilson walked over. "I have to use the bathroom," he said, "just let them keep doing what they're doing for a while." I told him that it wouldn't be a problem. The kids were wrestling in pairs according to weight, still in their little orange circles. G'Han was wrestling someone his size, but his opponent was suffering at his hands. G'Han mad pen after painful pen, and when I could no longer watch the slaughter I went over with the intentions of making a more even match. I asked Marcus, a bulky eighth grader, if he would mind switching partners. He said that he wouldn't mind and his present opponent breathed a sigh of relief. I walked with Marcus around other wrestling pairs to the opposite side of the mat. "G'Han," I said without a response from G'Han who had his weakened opponent in a double chicken wing. "G'Han," I said in a more authoritative tone. He looked up from his fun. "I would like you to switch opponents," I was being very polite. He said nothing, shook his head, and continued to grind his partner's head in the mat. "Get up G'Han," I was getting provoked. I knew he was testing me, but I was losing control. Everything was culminating. The pressure was building. No one was listening. I had been taking this stuff from him for three weeks. I was sick. I was tired, and I exploded. All the kids watched, mouths agape, as I lifted G'Han off the mat. I started telling him how disappointed I was. I told him how I thought he was acting. I told him exactly what I had on my mind. I embarrassed him in front of his friends. I was tired of taking his crap. The light his dark angry eyes like rubies, his hands contracted into fists, and his jaw bulged with his gritting teeth. I felt as

though I was staring down the barrel of a gun. Wilson walked in; everyone else was still.

"What's going on?," he asked striding across the mat. When I turned away to explain the situation, G'Han stormed out. "What's wrong?," Wilson asked, following G'Han out of the gym with his eyes. "

"I got angry so did he. I've got to go get him," I ran out after him and left Wilson in a forest of astonished trees. "G'Han! Please! Hold on!." All I wanted was a chance to tell him I was sorry I had made him so angry. I wanted him to know I was sorry. I followed him through the door, still running, into the dense July air.

"I don't want to talk to you!," he yelled, picking up the pace of his walk. But I still pursued, getting closer and closer along the gravel path. When I caught up to him, I wasn't sure that I hadn't made a mistake. I walked behind him for a few steps. Then he stopped and turned around.

His dark face glistened in the sun as the sunlight caught the tears rolling down his face. His eyes were red with tears. He looked at me with such a profound sorrow that all I could do was hold him.

My arms were long enough.

We stood there, crying in each others arms, and when the well of our emotions finally dried, we spoke almost in unison. He told me how sorry he was, and how he only knew to be angry, how he shut people out. I told him how wrong I had been, and how I had no excuse. He hugged me again and told me that he loved me. I told him I loved him too (I meant it). He told me how much he enjoyed my class on poetry, and I reminded him that he slept through that class. "I wasn't sleeping," he said like a robber who had gotten away with a fortune "I was learning." He smiled, and my insides lit up like a Christmas tree. He told me not to cry because I had an ugly crying face and I laughed. While we were walking back to the gym he told me that his big sister had moved to Birmingham with her boyfriend. He said that he missed her. He asked me to be his "new big sister." I almost started to cry, but instead, I smiled, and said I'd be happy to. It would be my pleasure.

G'Han became my little brother for the remaining two weeks of The Bridge Program. I tutored him after class, stuck close to him on field trips, and went to his All Star baseball games. I also became a sort of intermediary between him and the other teachers. No one knew why he listened to what I said; I told them it was because I listened to him. He became more attentive in all of his classes, even math (which he hated) and instead of the teachers sending him to the office, they'd send him to me. We could talk things through; we had a bond that other teachers couldn't comprehend. After all, I was his big sister.

G'Han taught me that there are no "problem children," only children. Kids have the same problems no matter where they live. We all just live. He taught me to be a Real teacher, he taught me how to learn. He taught me never to underestimate myself or others.

The best teacher I ever had was my student.

Kelly Jackson (12)

Shades

I was sitting with you in the shadowy part,
the shadows falling beside you
in soft black curtains, rising and falling
in spidery woven patterns, presenting the moon
and you.

And my mind and heart and toe all tapped together,
as if I could beat the real
out of that imaginary story I believed.
So, I said, and I understand, you said.
But we didn't have to say what we did.

But we did, and playing behind the curtains,
and the words swirled together and became together
the blues and reds and in an inseparable violet,
sometimes more red, more blue.
And tethered we were to them,
mixing under the warm moon.

And you asked...
Have you ever looked into someone's eyes...
And I said no because it was not a lie,
until that silver electric
flashed in those soft brown velvet of eyes.
And my mind and heart stopped... tapping the real,
as the curtains fell.

And that was that
for a talk, talk imaginary summer dream,
that hushed secret of a night,
that you perform so often—
that mouth dripping the script
of a plagiarizing heart.

Mandy Lomax (12)

Perched by the window
I sip the foam from the
rim of my glass and stare
down into the steaming cup
of mocha that warms my soul.
I think about love and laughter
and pain and sorrow
and wonder
why the hell we are here.

Margo Martin (11)



Sarah Harwell (11)

Beltane Dance

Si Bheag, Si Mhor

And field, wheat, fire
harvest around
maiden lock
and crescent brows
skirts aswirl,
fermented air
cool, crisp to breathe
spin, spin, and twirl
fall again
to seize the earth,
relish the soil,
hear in your blood
the pulse of flame,
the root of rhythm
to drive you into music
dancing on the Tor
dulcet, ravishing
flesh - bone -
release of the wind
from beating arms

pull it
from the Rowan,
the Druids,
from your clan's
acrid sweat
you have wept
sharp mead
you have drunk
in oak taverns tall
on slanting moors
and cracking seas
Fly.
the bubble in melody
sweeps along
to swallow all
joyously give chant
to heather and yew

what is sound but
vibrations
in the throat
of your ear
that peal
into your skull
and whip
your head
about your neck
sharp - twist - spring
wheel yourself
into the beat
captured and spun
with the crowned

Devon Williamson (12)

The Idea Of Falling In Love

Yeah, so love is...nice...like ice cream and...sweet dreams...of birthday cakes...well some say it's nice...so I think it's nice...I bet it's fun...waking by his side...love like a smooth ride...just rolling with the tide...so is it love...that we think is so great...or is it something...we fall into by fate...and maybe we do really fall...in love...with that one...that one you eye...or the one on t. v....in the sleek magazine...that's for the teen...and maybe we fall...in love with the idea of falling...in love...in love with...long walks...long talks and sharing drinks...laying side by side...in love with...joint grocery shopping and...dancing under the stars...wild flowers and weekends in the park...on a beach...what lovely times...we all want these times...or some kind of times...times that make you...feel love...feel loved...see stars and...big moons and...bright colors...I could easily fall in love...with the idea of falling...in love.

K.C. Bull (12)

In the Right Now

Jess, they don't tiptoe around like we used to.
Our small pudgy feet wrapped and binded in hot pink Burlington,
caressed the first grade carpet with eloquence.
Well, yours did.
I could never reach you, really.
You were a schemer at the smooth skinned age of seven,
and I could never reach you.

It is specifically in the ripe recollection
of your sister's bare naked skin
and your laughter from the hallway
that I remember you at your best.
I knew the meaning of humiliation.
You were the queen of those years.
Queen of the creek, Queen of the pineconed forest,
and Queen of my nerves.
I, swallowing your every careless yet agile move,
was choking.
I held a mouth full of your glory.
I wanted your deft agility.
During your reign, my shadow followed you.
I was just sort of there.

Other people have ruled since you.
They have sat in your chair.

We have left our pinecone padded forest,
and the backyard where we bred our dogs.
We prefer skimmed milk to frozen buttermilk.
And that we watched Dirty Dancing is no longer a secret.

We have grown into dangerous pieces.
We have cultivated new beds.
We have been sanded down by dares.
We have been convicted by truths.
We have been taken by tricks.
We have been broken by loves.
We have been settled by bulimia.

But tonight, as the California roll slithers this and that way,
down your thin frame of a throat,
I finally got to you.
And as different as we have extended ourselves to be
We touched for the very first time.
And as different as we have enlarged ourselves to be
we spoke for the very first time.

My dear,
We are here, this year --
The year in which we rule ourselves.
And in the right now,
at the tanned and toned age of seventeen,
We have reached each other.

Tallu Schuyler (12)



Allison Davis (12)

How ticklish the soul of time is.

Is it the tick or the tock, which is frozen, in our minds?

The rhythmic beating of the second
has its hands over us.

The metal coils,
Waiting in taut silence,
Spring into our emotion and distort them.
Fleeing from us when so desperately sought.

Lolling so when not wanted.
The hypocritical clock is unalterably with us.
But does it ever tell the right time?

Rachel Worrell (11)

Too Perfect

What is underneath...perfect curls...perfect skin...sweet, sweet...such a sweet...good clothes...nice fit...like out of...J.Crew...what's under this...sweet scholar...with the...two parents...two arms...two legs...one dog...one life ...what's beneath...the psalms...love of God...praise and praise...yes mommy says to pray...and sing...sing so pretty...all so perfect...to me...and no problems...it can't be...seems so...right...but nothing is...nothing can be...so right...it has to be wrong...if it is so right...to be always right...always be so...nice and pretty...her untouched breasts...untouched lips...they have to...scream...they must...or can they always go...untouched

K.C. Bull (12)

The Field

Bare and majestic,
your vast symmetry seems to command respect
from all who set their eyes upon your rectangular face,
Your ability to unify us in victory or defeat has always commanded *my*
respect.
But now there is no laughter, there are no tears,
and you are blanketed in a thick coat of silence.
Tonight in darkness, empty from all of the day's distractions,
are you at peace?
While you appear proud and lovely as ever,
I know that you are not complete.
Autumn has begun to impose its presence upon you,
 in patches of brown and gray
The cool air comes and goes, bending your strong blades of grass.
I feel the need to defend you against the change in season,
I feel you are being taken from me, like a child in the night.
It seems, you always wanted a little more than I was able to give you.
You remain so quiet tonight,
like you are resting, and I feel we have grown apart
How I would like to run in the moonlight with you,
to lie in your cool embrace for just a little longer.
But the shadows in your corners still whisper me their secrets,
and they tell me it is time to go.

Reed Harrison (10)

A Sermon

I'd like to take the voice of this little
white girl and become a Southern black preacher.
Standing behind a high pulpit
I'll raise my hands and heave and sweat and cry out,

"Where are you, my America?!"
Huddled in your automobiles,
your personal islands on a crowded highway?
Hidden in the shadows with a
bottle of Jack Daniels for companionship?
Waiting on street corners for children
with your needles and your powders?

You.
My people.
Have lost yourselves to the vanities of the grocery store.
You eat,
you horde,
you become gluttons
upon the fat free cookies
and diet pills of your laziness.

It is time for a Revolution!

And I call to you all to wake up and smell the kerosene,
because you are burning the day light as you
lie in bed watching the "Price is Right",
when all you've ever earned in your life
was that swift slap from your mammy
when you sass'd her and she turned
to you with her eyes rolling back in her head and said,
 'My child, there is a fine line between
 a smart aleck and a smart ass.'

But you've lost that smartness
and now you Alecks and you Asses are running the streets
looking for the women who raised you.

It is time to become a Nation under God, my friends,
we are too old to be his Children.

Devon Williamson (12)

My Insecurity

I can not yet see clearly that edible light,
but I can feel the honesty and the doubtless trust in her softly spoken
yet curious words.
I talk, I listen, and at the same time I can see the smooth and subtle curves of
my own self;
my diminishing breasts, my softening hips, and my once astounding but now
merely ordinary legs.
But in that moment and in those words I can see and hear an acceptance.
I listen to her words.
and though they carry foreign ideas,
they are very comforting to me.
I am suddenly able to grasp the beauty of her language and understand her
dialect,
though I am still not able to speak in the perfection of her fluent tongue.
I have found a new house for my troubles,
a new refuge from those saturating rainy days.
But what can I offer in return?
I can only provide an open ear and an open mind.
But I can see clearly that this will suffice.
My eyes become swollen with salty rivers at my revelation,
but my tears are hindered by a still cautious soul.
I have been conditioned to swallow my emotional indulgence,
to binge on the pain and furor.
Now I have the need and the desire to purge all that has been stifled within
myself,
But is this a safe place?
Will she be repulsed by my insecurities?
I think not, so I speak.
I think not, so I am enveloped in her benign sanction.
I have espied a friend to say the least,
and each time I think of her solacing and embracing utterances,
it is all I can do to damn the rivers in my eyes and swallow the gratitude I feel
constricting my swollen, scarred throat.

Jessica Betts (12)



Vanessa Jones (11)

Fragments

A tiny imperfection, pink and puffy, the only remaining evidence.

A scar worn smooth and thick over time,

like coral,

defeated by the stubborn will of the sea.

I remember that winter so well,

cold and miserable.

Long hours in the house passing like days.

Blue and green Herend rabbits, inhabiting the old dresser, beckoned me like snakes in the garden of Eden.

Such treasures are not intended for clumsy, little fingers,

alas childish games,

the jingle of forbidden charms,

so often lead to

broken

glass.

A tiny imperfection, pink and puffy, the only remaining evidence.

Silver necklaces,

and earrings that would later break,

I accepted them with much joy and little reservation before we headed west.

We were cramped together like sardines as the distance between us became greater.

But the nights were peaceful,

under the stars.

The journey that marked an end and a beginning.

A tiny imperfection, pink and puffy, the only remaining evidence.

Waiting

for that horrid, gray, plastic telephone

to emit its piercing wail.

The bewildering and need for closure was thrown upon us,

like a night terror.

Shards of guilt at those things said and those left unspoken.

Superficial trinkets of the past

create an eerie museum for dust to blanket.

Familiar scents, and faded photographs leave us

with little more than

broken glass and

shooting stars.

Reed Harrison (10)

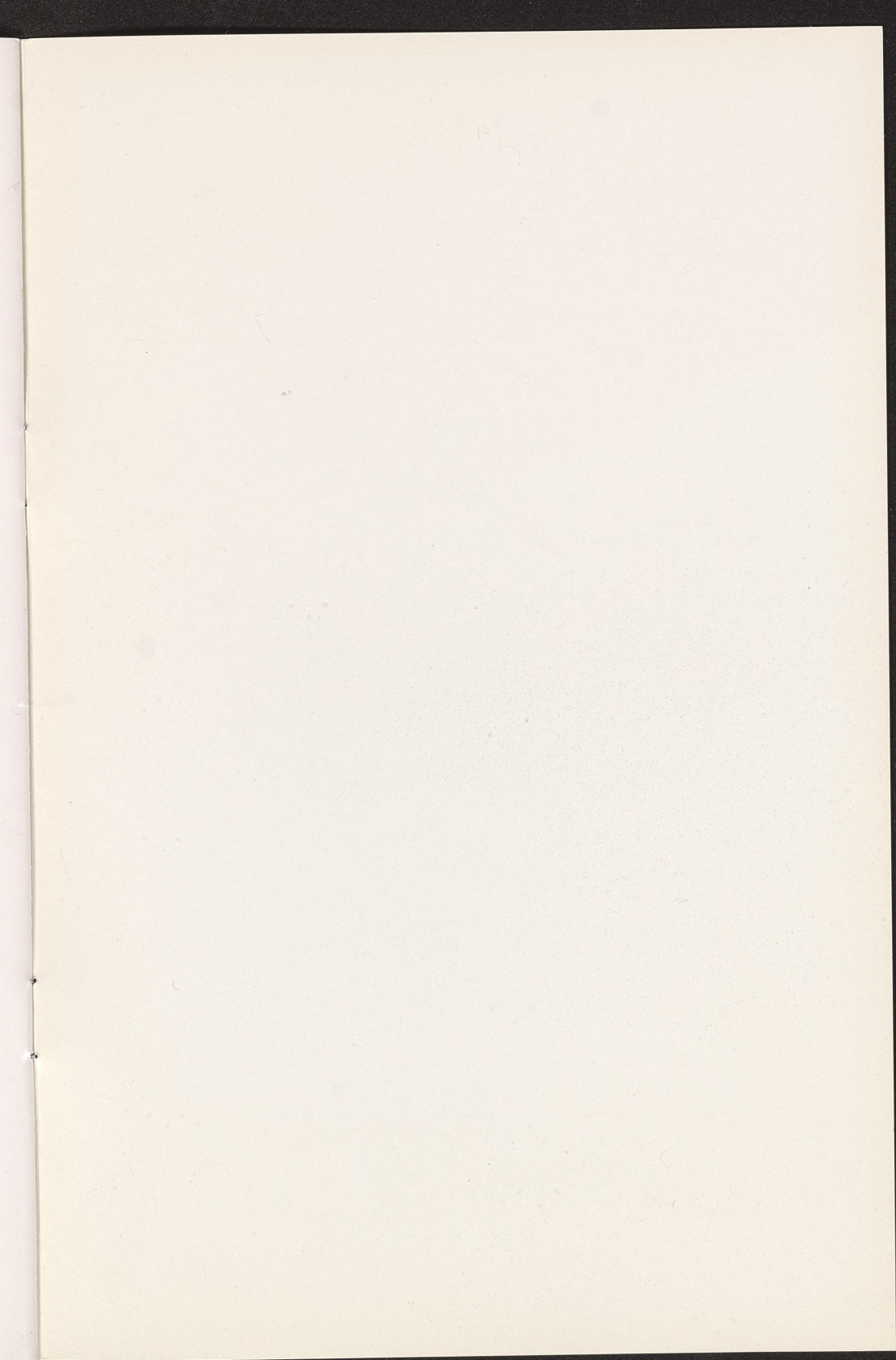


Song

K.C. Bull (12)

When you come to my house in the clouds
you will find me there, waiting for you
sitting on the winding steps of memory.
I am sure it will be
a pleasant visit.
I have oranges for you
on which the sun is yet fragrant
and to go along with them
a small smile, blurred around the corners.
Come walking; when you are near
stop for a moment
then walk up the slope to my house
not too slowly and not too fast.
The door will be ready for you to open
but let your touch linger a little
softly, steadily on the round smooth knob
And when you enter,
open the door gently
and step inside with a footfall like a kiss
so as not to let out the quiet.

Anna Lappalainen (10)



Hallmarks

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